

be considered an asset, or, specifically referred to as a knowledge asset. Knowledge assets refer to any active, organized and reasoned content. Specifically, the content of a knowledge asset can be data, information or meaning. The structure of the knowledge asset can be the relationships among components of the content or how the content is organized. The reasoning of the knowledge asset can be a process that uses the structure to access the content in order to perform cognitive tasks like decision making, problem solving, or interpretation. Such knowledge assets often manifest themselves in a company by the know-how of employees who are experts in particular areas, product development groups experienced in developing products or services, and electronic information accumulated through research, development, production and marketing. A detailed recitation of knowledge assets is provided in the publication Knowledge Assets: A Professional's Guide to Valuation and Financial Management, by Mark Clare and Arthur DeTore, Harcourt Professional Publishing, New York, 2000, the complete text of which is hereby expressly incorporated into the specification by reference.

Because knowledge in a particular discipline may be large and disorganized, it may not be readily accessible to users either inside or outside the organization. Access to this knowledge, however, can be an important factor in determining value. Knowledge that is not accessible may have little practical value regardless of its content. For such knowledge to have value, it should be organized and accessible.

For purposes of the discussion herein, an area of knowledge will be referred to as a domain. Specifically, a domain refers to a particular body of knowledge, and a set of methods for creating, sharing and using that body of knowledge to achieve a given purpose. Academic fields of study (*e.g.*, mathematics or fine arts), professions (*e.g.*, law or medicine), departments within a business (*e.g.*, accounting or human resources) and even specific areas of expertise (*e.g.*, the ability to troubleshoot complex equipment on an assembly line) are all examples of domains. Structured domains, like law and medicine, are very organized, formally managed, and mature. They have highly articulated bodies of knowledge, and well-recognized and established methods for creating, accessing, and using that knowledge. Some domains, however, are more structured than others. Within business, for example, design

engineering is a more structured domain than general management problem solving, and financial accounting is a more structured domain than coaching and developing employees.

Unstructured domains tend to be less clearly defined than their more structured counterparts. This is because, typically, unstructured domains cut across formal organizational lines, departmental boundaries, functional areas, or product families. General management, information technology management and, now, knowledge management, have all been concerned with developing methods and devices for structuring these domains in the hopes of more effectively utilizing the resources they contain and, thus, creating additional value for the organization. Today, significant investments are being made in document management, customer information systems, business intelligence processes, intranets, enterprise-wide information portals, managing intellectual capital and doing business on the internet, all of which are, to some extent, domain structuring tasks.

Entrepreneurs, management consultants, technology product vendors and others have strived to develop methodologies and offerings for partially structuring particular domains. Currently, however, there is no developed general purpose domain structuring methodology. For example, software applications and methodologies are readily available for structuring the domain of competitor information. Although their solutions can be very comprehensive for competitor information, they do not readily extend to, and are not useful for structuring other domains. On the other hand, many tools and methods exist for structuring "web content" for use both inside the organization (*e.g.*, intranets) and outside the organization (*e.g.*, web sites or e-business sites). Web content methodologies can be general enough to be applied to several domains. However, at best, they only partially structure domains. This is because information and knowledge sources of most domains go far beyond what can be used as web content.

The method of the present invention is useful because it can be used for structuring any domain to the appropriate degree. For purposes of this discussion, appropriate degree refers to the extent that structuring the domain is cost beneficial or otherwise value creating. This method is further useful because it acknowledges the fact that in many cases it is not possible to know in advance how much structure a domain requires to be value creating.